

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 24, 2023

The Honorable Antony Blinken
Secretary
U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
Washington, DC 20528

Dear Secretary Blinken and Secretary Mayorkas:

We write to you both to express our support for your encouraging efforts to include Israel in the Visa Waiver Program and to urge both the Department of State and Department of Homeland Security to finalize Israel's participation in Fiscal Year 2023.

One of the key requirements for entry to the program is an applicant country having a non-immigrant visa refusal rate fall below 3%—a mark that Israel achieved in January of this year. Since that time, Israel's Knesset has passed all the required legislation to facilitate the data sharing necessary for Israel's inclusion in the program. Israel has also been working meticulously to implement the technical requirements necessary for the program.

We recognize that there are still some outstanding issues that must be addressed before Israel's participation in the program can be finalized. We encourage all sides to continue their efforts to take the steps necessary to complete Israel's required actions before the deadline in September 2023.

We commend Ambassador Nides and the staff of the U.S. Embassy in Israel for their work and leadership in prioritizing this issue and encouraging the progress made up to this point. It is clear from the quick legislative action that the Israelis remain committed to working as diligently as possible to pass the necessary benchmarks and gain admission into the program.

Approximately 450,000 Israelis travel annually to the United States, and that number has been increasing each year. Significant travel demand exists, with 93 weekly direct flights from Israel to U.S. airports. These flights arrive in all regions of our country, including flights to the Northeast, South, Midwest, the West Coast. Israel's inclusion in the Visa Waiver Program would significantly increase the potential for both tourism and business travel providing benefits to both countries.


We hope that your agencies will continue to work urgently to ensure that the momentum is not lost and Israel's acceptance into the program is approved this year.

Thank you for your consideration.

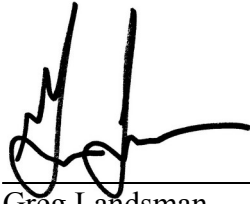
Sincerely,



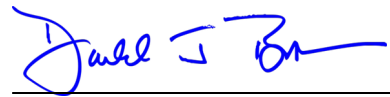
Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



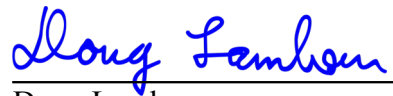
Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress



Kathy Manning
Member of Congress



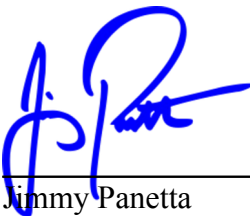
Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



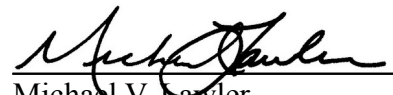
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Michael V. Lawler
Member of Congress